



integratedITSM or ITIL®?

The Important Differences to Consider for Your Training Investment

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Introduction

CIOs and IT organizations invest heavily in training and certifications to ensure their teams can manage IT service delivery effectively. Choosing the right approach requires understanding not just what frameworks intend to achieve, but how well they support day-to-day execution.

Many IT service management frameworks provide high-level guidance and conceptual models. However, organizations frequently report that these models do not deliver sufficient practical direction on how to design, operate, stabilize, and improve services in real environments.

In contrast to many frameworks, including the latest iteration of ITIL (ITIL 5), the integratedITSM system, and associated certification scheme, co-developed by Pink Elephant and Professional Designations Corp. (PDC), was designed with a primary focus on execution. Its content emphasizes practical guidance, clear process design, and actionable improvement methods that can be applied immediately following training.

Frameworks Don't Fail – Execution Does!

For CIOs and IT leaders, the challenge has rarely been a lack of frameworks. The challenge has been converting intent into consistent, repeatable execution.

Across industries and regions, Pink Elephant hears a common message from practitioners, managers, and process owners: organizations need practical help with operational processes and enablers, not additional conceptual models.

This shift in expectations is reflected in the growing adoption of integratedITSM training, as practitioners seek clearer guidance on how work should actually be performed.

Strategy Sets Direction. Operations Determine Results

Organizations consistently report similar needs:

- We already have frameworks – we need help making them work.
- We need clearer guidance on roles, processes, and priorities.
- We want to improve service performance without destabilizing live operations.
- We care less about models and more about outcomes.

While strategic models and diagrams can help explain intent, they do not answer the practical questions teams face daily:

- What does 'good' look like for this process?



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The Important Differences to Consider for Your Training Investment

- How do we know it's working?
- What should we improve first?
- How do we improve safely and sustainably?

These are execution questions – not framework questions.

The Execution Gap

As frameworks have evolved toward broader and more strategic perspectives, many organizations have experienced a widening execution gap. Investment in tools, platforms, and automation continues to increase, yet service quality and consistency often remain uneven.

This gap does not reflect a lack of commitment or capability. It exists because high-level guidance rarely explains how work should be performed, how processes interact, or how improvement should be sequenced in practice.

Operational discipline remains essential.

What integratedITSM is Designed to Provide

integratedITSM was created to address this execution gap. Rather than introducing another abstract model, it treats process management and improvement as applied disciplines.

It provides practical guidance on how ITSM processes operate in real organizations, including:

- roles and responsibilities
- triggers and controls
- measures and metrics
- process interfaces
- improvement mechanisms

This guidance is applied consistently across core ITSM processes, creating a shared structure and common language that supports clarity, coordination, and improvement.

Strategy Within the integratedITSM System

integratedITSM does address strategy, but always in service of execution. Leadership, governance, organizational change, and continual improvement are treated as enablers that must translate into observable operational behavior. Strategy is not an end state; it is an ongoing responsibility.



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Why This Matters in an AI-enabled World

Automation and AI are rapidly reshaping IT service work. As repetitive tasks are automated, human effort increasingly focuses on judgment, exception handling, and improvement.

In this environment, poorly defined processes do not improve when automated; they fail faster.

Clear process definition, role clarity, and disciplined execution are essential foundations for effective and safe automation. AI amplifies what already exists, for better or worse.

Frameworks Don't Run Organizations. People Do!

integratedITSM emphasizes how processes actually work, how services are stabilized and improved, and how people contribute to outcomes.

By focusing on execution discipline, process clarity, and leadership accountability, it helps organizations move from intent to measurable, sustainable results.

ITIL, COBIT, Agile, DevOps, and Lean each contribute valuable perspectives. The latest version of ITIL continues this evolution, emphasizing strategy, experience management, and automation-enabled environments. For senior stakeholders, this provides useful insight into the direction of IT service management.

However, many organizations are already reporting that ITIL 5, like ITIL 4 before it, does not provide sufficient operational guidance for running and improving services on a day-to-day basis. Organizations looking beyond ITIL often seek clearer implementation guidance and more flexible learning paths. integratedITSM was designed to meet those needs.

Take a closer look at just some key comparative examples in the following table between the ITIL designation scheme and the integratedITSM designation scheme...



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The Important Differences to Consider for Your Training Investment

Key comparative factors	ITIL® Designation Scheme	integratedITSM™ Designation Scheme
Is there a mandatory first course in the designation scheme?	Yes. ITIL Foundation is a mandatory first course and must be taken before any other course in the ITIL designation scheme.	No. There are no mandatory first courses in the integratedITSM designation scheme offering a more flexible approach.
Is there a business focus and 'system thinking' approach?	Yes. ITIL promotes a SVS (service value system) consisting of multiple components described below.	Yes. integratedITSM promotes an easy to grasp integrated system with a focus on multiple key enablers identified to achieve overall success, integration, and alignment between ITSM processes, IT, and business goals and objectives.
Is recertification required?	Yes. ITIL has a mandatory recertification requirements every three years, and a minimum of 20 CPD points annually is needed for renewal. Students must purchase the exam and/or courses within the ITIL scheme to achieve recertification.	No. There are no mandatory recertification requirements. One and done.
How many designations are offered?	ITIL offers four designations: Practice Manager, Managing Professional, Strategic Leader, and ITIL Master.	The integratedITSM designation scheme offers six designations, as shown on the next page.
What are the main teaching points of the 'cornerstone' course?	The cornerstone course is ITIL Foundation, which is a mandatory first course. The agenda provides only a very high-level overview of the service value system, which includes 34 practices, four dimensions, and seven guiding principles. The curriculum does not include how-to guidance for process improvement. To obtain knowledge beyond just theory, students can take several individual practice manager courses after the mandatory ITIL Foundation course.	There are two cornerstone courses: The integratedITSM System and integratedITSM Essentials. Students learn about systems thinking and three levels of business and IT integration, and many how-to practicalities related to process management including the very specific building blocks for establishing and managing nine key ITSM processes and enablers: incident, problem, change, request, release and deployment, configuration, business relationship, service level, and IT asset management.



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The Important Differences to Consider for Your Training Investment

The integratedITSM Scheme Offers 10 Certifications and 6 Designations



The integratedITSM Designation Scheme

Certifications	Organizational Change Management Architect	IT Business Relationship Management Architect	Value Stream Mapping Architect	IT Performance & Improvement Management Architect	integratedITSM Professional	integratedITSM Champion
The integratedITSM System	○	○	○	○	○	○
integratedITSM Essentials	○	○	○	○	○	○
Lean IT Essentials					○	○
Agile Scrum Essentials					○	○
Organizational Change Management	○					○
IT Business Relationship Manager		○				○
Value Stream Mapping			○			○
IT Performance & Improvement Management				○		○
Enabling integratedITSM with DevOps, Agile & Lean						○
IT Business Leader						○

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Pink Elephant and PDC distinguish themselves by eliminating mandatory recertification, removing the requirement for a fixed starting course, and significantly reducing overall costs.

The integratedITSM certification program is built around cornerstone courses that deliver consultative, how-to content – equipping professionals with the knowledge to apply ITSM practices effectively in real-world settings.

integratedITSM Designations:

- integratedITSM Champion**
 Ten certifications required. This designation is recognized as a premier credential in the ITSM field. It demonstrates a comprehensive mastery of integrated IT service management, Agile and Lean practices, IT leadership, organizational change management, and business relationship management. Holders of this designation are equipped to lead IT teams and drive transformative initiatives across the enterprise.



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The Important Differences to Consider for Your Training Investment

- **integratedITSM Professional**
Four certifications required. This designation reflects a deep and practical understanding of integrated ITSM, Lean IT, Agile Scrum, and related enablers. It prepares professionals to actively manage IT initiatives and contribute effectively to team-based service delivery.
- **Organizational Change Management Architect**
Three certifications required. This designation signifies an advanced capability to lead and support organizational change in complex environments. It underscores the recipient's ability to align IT service management improvements with broader business transformation goals.
- **IT Business Relationship Management Architect**
Three certifications required. This designation affirms the ability to manage and foster key IT-business relationships. Holders are equipped to work effectively at operational, tactical, and strategic levels to support service success and business alignment.
- **Value Stream Mapping Architect**
Three certifications required. This designation confirms expertise in process design, management, and mapping. Recipients are positioned to identify and streamline workflows to enhance business outcomes and IT service effectiveness.
- **IT Performance & Improvement Management Architect**
Three certifications required. This designation validates skills in conducting assessments, identifying improvement areas, and implementing metrics to monitor and drive performance. Professionals with this designation support continuous improvement across IT and business services.

About Pink Elephant

Pink Elephant is a global leader in IT service management (ITSM) consulting, education, and professional certification, with more than 40 years of experience helping organizations improve the way IT delivers value to the business.

Since the early days of ITSM, Pink Elephant has played a pivotal role in introducing, applying, and advancing ITSM best practices worldwide. Pink Elephant consultants and instructors have worked with thousands of organizations across all industries, supporting practical improvements in service quality, reliability, governance, and business alignment.

Consulting has always been at the core of Pink Elephant's work. Consulting services focus on helping organizations move from intent to execution by establishing clear baselines, identifying



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capability gaps, and delivering pragmatic improvement roadmaps that are realistic, prioritized, and measurable. Engagements are grounded in real-world experience and tailored to each organization's context, maturity, and objectives.

Drawing on this extensive consulting and delivery experience, Pink Elephant has contributed to the development of integratedITSM – a pragmatic body of knowledge built on established, non-proprietary ITSM best practices and designed to support consistent execution and sustainable improvement. integratedITSM is supported by a structured suite of certifications and professional designations, reinforcing Pink Elephant's long-standing commitment to professional capability development.

Today, Pink Elephant delivers consulting and education that emphasize disciplined execution, measurable outcomes, and lasting organizational capability rather than theoretical compliance. This balanced, experience-led approach has made Pink Elephant a trusted partner for organizations operating in complex, evolving IT environments.

To learn more, visit www.pinkelephant.com.

About Professional Designations Corp. (PDC) Empowering Business Talent through Certification

PDC is an examination institute dedicated to high-integrity certification and assessment processes. Its credentials are developed and regularly updated by respected industry experts to reflect critical knowledge areas and evolving professional practices.

PDC's portfolio includes the integratedITSM certification program – a modern and practical approach to IT service management that meets the real-world needs of today's organizations.

To learn more, visit www.professionaldesignations.com.